

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Received & Inspected

MAY 17 2018

394

FCC Mail Room

May 15, 2018

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We thank the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for its recent Order addressing certain High-Cost Universal Service Fund (USF) budget shortfalls. The recent Order is an essential near-term step in the right direction, but we encourage the FCC to adopt longer-term USF budget solutions that will ensure rural Americans the opportunity to obtain voice and broadband services on a basis that is reasonably comparable to what other Americans enjoy.

In multiple letters, Congress has expressed broad support for addressing High-Cost program shortfalls. In May 2017, nearly 160 Members of Congress wrote to the FCC, expressing concern about the impact of insufficient USF resources on rural consumers. In October 2017, nearly 75 Members of Congress asked the FCC to immediately address the budget shortfall and continue collecting the same USF budget levels for the High-Cost program pending development of a longer-term solution.

The FCC's recent Order approving an infusion of funds into the USF is greatly welcomed, but it also represents a recognition of, and an incomplete salve for, a more significant problem – the fact that the High-Cost USF program has been and remains insufficient (notwithstanding the recent injection of support). This persistent insufficiency is affecting the ability of smaller rural broadband providers to effectively deliver broadband services in the most rural areas of America. For example, we understand the FCC's cost model for smaller operators is still not funded at the levels as designed, while those smaller carriers that do not receive model support may face even steeper support cuts than before when the program's new "fiscal year" takes effect on July 1. For all the work just undertaken, these recurring budget shortfalls will yet again translate to lower speeds, more unserved locations, and higher prices for rural consumers and businesses.

To be clear, we greatly appreciate the steps taken by the FCC thus far to address such concerns. However, until longer-term budget solutions are addressed as well, many smaller operators will remain unable to offer high quality, affordable broadband to consumers across rural America. For these reasons, we encourage the FCC to act as soon as possible pursuant to the notice of proposed rulemaking included with the order to provide support that is both sufficient and predictable on a longer-term basis as mandated by statute.

Thank you for your consideration. We share your goal of eliminating the digital divide and look forward to working with you to ensure rural American consumers and businesses have access to quality, affordable broadband.


Sincerely,




Kevin Cramer
Member of Congress



Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



Luke Messer
Member of Congress



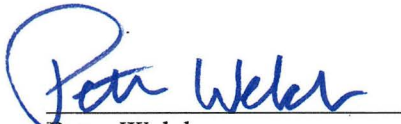
Scott Desjarlais
Member of Congress



Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



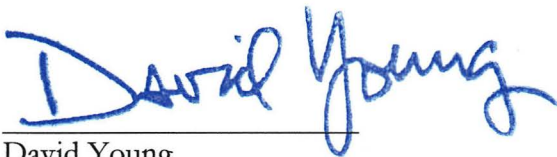
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



David Young
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



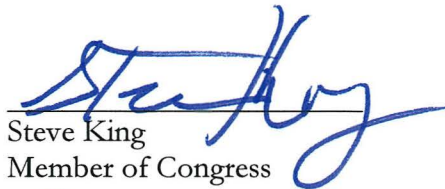
Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Mo Brooks
Member of Congress



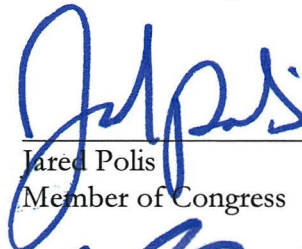
Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress



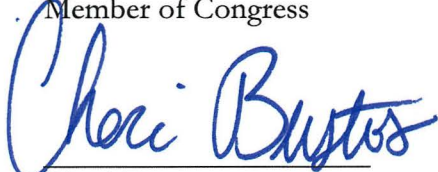
Steve King
Member of Congress



Kristi Noem
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



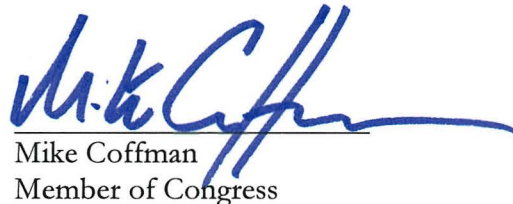
Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



James Comer
Member of Congress



Mike Coffman
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



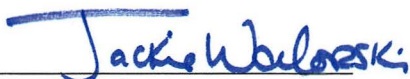
Lynn Jenkins
Member of Congress



Sean Duffy
Member of Congress



Austin Scott
Member of Congress



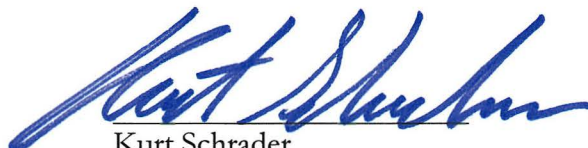
Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress



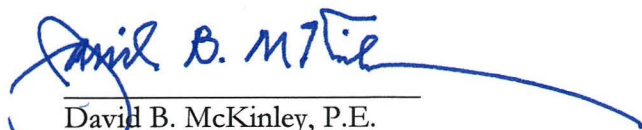
Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

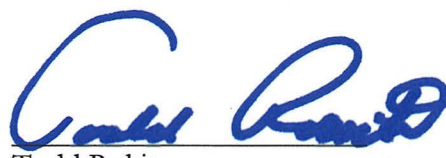


Chris Stewart
Member of Congress




Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress


Todd Rokita
Member of Congress



Frank Lucas
Member of Congress



Mike Bost
Member of Congress

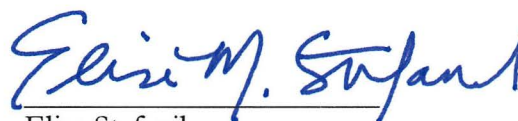

David G. Valadao
Member of Congress


Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress


Hal Rogers
Member of Congress


Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress

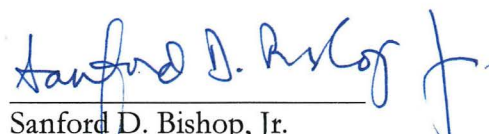

Rick W. Allen
Member of Congress

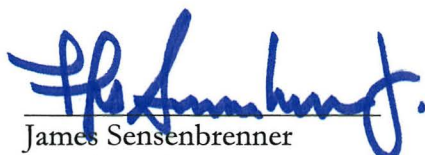

Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress

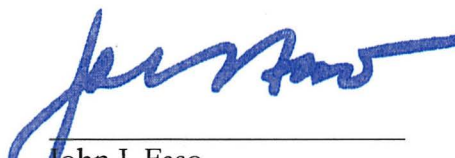

Rick Crawford
Member of Congress


Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress


Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

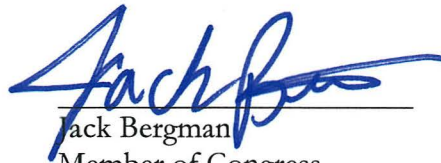

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress


James Sensenbrenner
Member of Congress

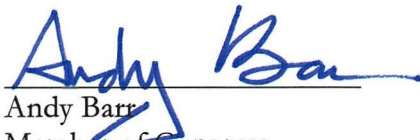

John J. Faso
Member of Congress



Rod Blum
Member of Congress



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress



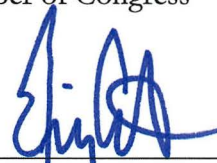
Andy Barr
Member of Congress



Ted Budd
Member of Congress



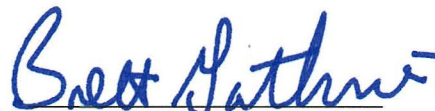
Rob Bishop
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Susan W. Brooks
Member of Congress



Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Alex X. Mooney
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



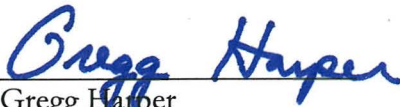
Ron Estes
Member of Congress



Diane Black
Member of Congress



Ryan Costello
Member of Congress



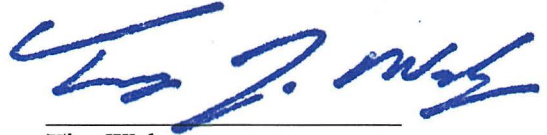
Gregg Harper
Member of Congress



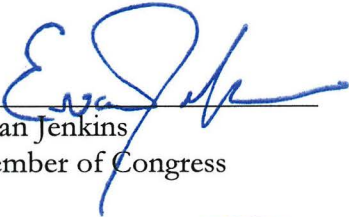
Roger Marshall
Member of Congress



Larry Bucshon, M.D.
Member of Congress



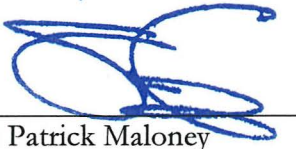
Tim Walz
Member of Congress



Evan Jenkins
Member of Congress



Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress



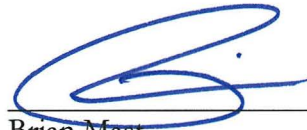
Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



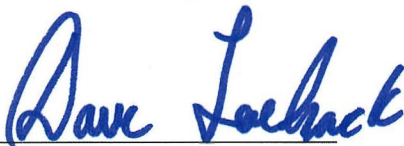
Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress



Adam Kinzinger
Member of Congress



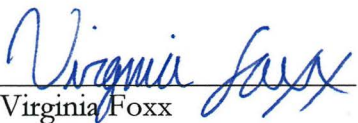
Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



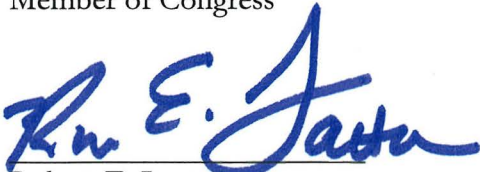
Steve Russell
Member of Congress



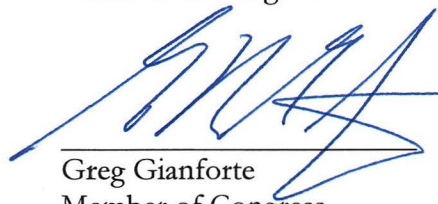
Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress



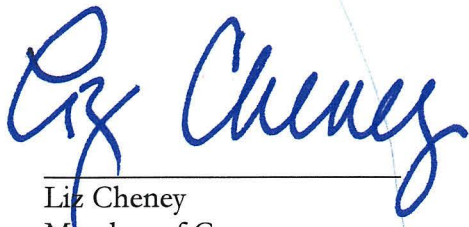
Bill Johnson
Member of Congress



Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress



Greg Gianforte
Member of Congress



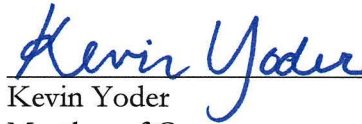
Liz Cheney
Member of Congress



Billy Long
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



Kevin Yoder
Member of Congress



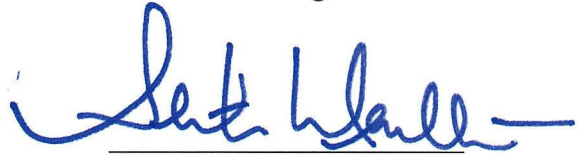
Scott Tipton
Member of Congress



Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress



Tom Cole
Member of Congress



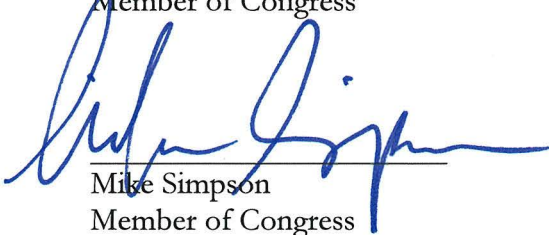
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



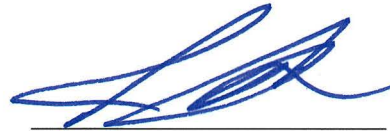
Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis
Member of Congress



Mike Simpson
Member of Congress



Ralph Abraham
Member of Congress



Mark Meadows
Member of Congress



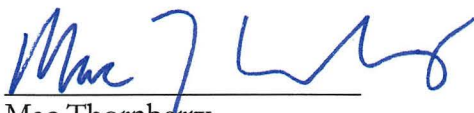
John Shimkus
Member of Congress



Blaine Luetkemeyer
Member of Congress



John Ratcliffe
Member of Congress



Mac Thornberry
Member of Congress



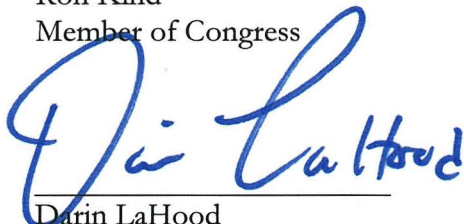
Ken Buck
Member of Congress



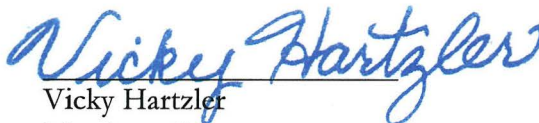
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Paul Cook
Member of Congress



Darin LaHood
Member of Congress



Vicky Hartzler
Member of Congress



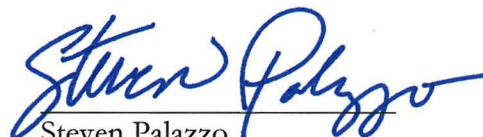
El Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress



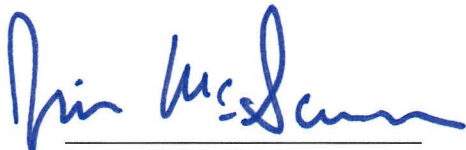
Sam Graves
Member of Congress



Brad Wenstrup
Member of Congress



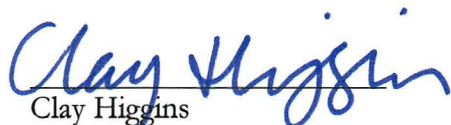
Steven Palazzo
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress




K. Michael Conaway
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress



A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



Mark Sanford
Member of Congress



Erik Paulsen
Member of Congress



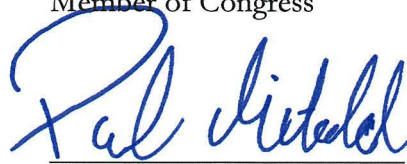
Chris Collins
Member of Congress



Pete Olson
Member of Congress



David Rouzer
Member of Congress



Paul Mitchell
Member of Congress



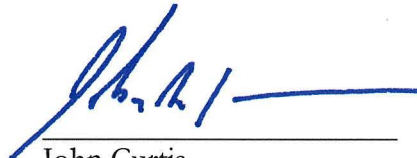
Mia Love
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



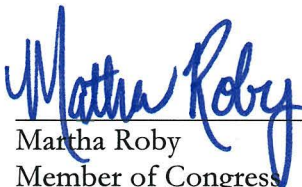
John Curtis
Member of Congress



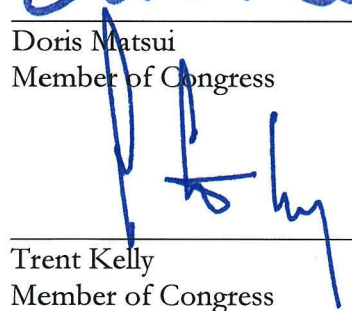
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



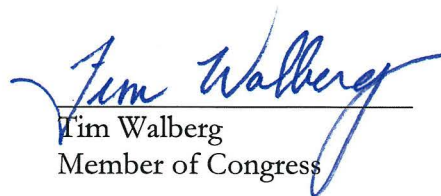
Martha Roby
Member of Congress



Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



French Hill
Member of Congress



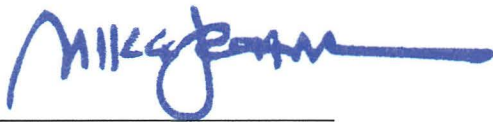
Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



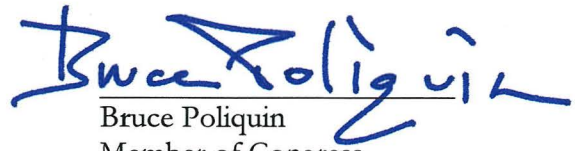
Tom Rice
Member of Congress



Randy Weber
Member of Congress



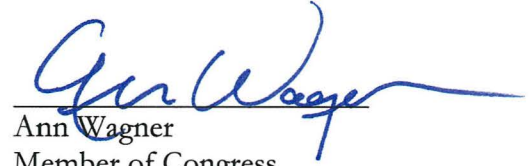
Mike Johnson
Member of Congress



Bruce Poliquin
Member of Congress



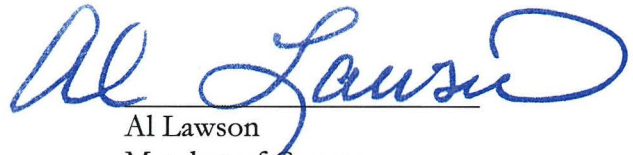
Alma Adams
Member of Congress



Ann Wagner
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Al Lawson
Member of Congress